



News Release

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City wins award for renewable energy project

RIVERSIDE, Calif. – A city program that takes the grease out of restaurants and converts it into methane gas power has won a prestigious award.

The Grease to Gas Program won the League of California Cities' Helen Putnam Award for Excellence in Planning and Environmental Quality earlier this month.

The two-year-old program gives Southern California restaurant grease – about 30,000 gallons a day – a place to be digested other than a stomach. The greasy water is taken from the restaurants to the city's wastewater plant where huge anaerobic digestion tanks turn it into methane. In turn, that energy almost entirely powers the wastewater plant, saving the city about \$80,000 a month in natural gas

bills. In addition, the city charges disposal companies 3 cents per gallon to dispose of the grease, adding \$21,000 a month to city revenues.

As a result, area restaurants have found a way to dispose of waste grease that has been banned from landfills and clogs sewer pipes. And the city has found a renewable energy source capable of generating about 1.5 megawatts of power every day, enough to generate the energy needs of about 13,000 homes for a month.

"It's the first step on the road to energy independence," said Regan Bailey, wastewater operations manager.

He said the electrical power potential in the country could be vastly increased with this method.

"This program has proven that positive results and cost benefits can be achieved while remaining sensitive to the earth's environment," he added.

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